

# NEW DISTRIBUTION RECORDS FOR THE YELLOW PALMDART CEPHRENES TRICHOPEPLA AND THE ORANGE PALMDART CEPHRENES AUGIADES SPERTHIAS FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

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## ABSTRACT

The Yellow Palmdart Butterfly *Cephrenes trichopepla* is recorded from Exmouth and Geraldton. The Orange Palmdart Butterfly *Cephrenes augiades sperthias* is recorded from Geraldton.

## INTRODUCTION

The Yellow Palmdart *Cephrenes trichopepla* has a distribution from north-western Australia to Queensland and the Orange Palmdart *Cephrenes augiades sperthias* occurs from Cape York to New South Wales (Common and Waterhouse 1981). In recent years both species have extended their ranges southwards, probably as a result of the dispersal of ornamental palms (Hutchison 1983, 1988, 1989; Petrie 1985; Williams 1991). *C. trichopepla* has now been recorded from Port Hedland, Karratha and Onslow in the north west of Western Australia, and from Wanneroo 25 km north of Perth (Hutchison 1988; Williams 1991). In eastern Australia it has extended its range as far south as Byron Bay, New South Wales (Petrie 1985). *C. augiades sperthias* was first recorded in Western Australia at Wanneroo in 1977 (Hutchison 1983), and has since become established in the Perth metropolitan area. The species has also been recorded from the coastal towns of Karratha, Mandurah, Dawesville, Margaret River and Esperance (Hutchison 1988, 1989). In eastern Australia *C. a. sperthias* was recently recorded at Camberwell near Melbourne, Victoria (Crosby 1990).

## OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

In December 1991 I found *C. trichopepla* in the Exmouth townsite where larvae and pupae were common on Pigmy Date Palms *Phoenix roebelenii* and Cotton Palms *Washingtonia robusta*. Damage by larvae to the palms appeared severe, first being noted by parks and gardens personnel three months earlier in September 1991 (Ian Buckley, Shire of Exmouth, pers. comm.). Although *C. trichopepla*

may have arrived via strong winds from Onslow, it is more likely that the species was introduced on recently imported palms. Previous close examination by me of palms in Exmouth in 1989 and 1990 found no evidence of this species being present at that time.

In May 1992 I collected larvae, pupae and empty pupal cases of *C. augiades sperthias*, and pupae of *C. trichopepla* on Bangalow Palms *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana* at Geraldton. I found them only on this species of palm in established suburban gardens in the town. While larvae and pupae of *C. augiades sperthias* were reared to adults, the pupae of *C. trichopepla* had been parasitised. The presence of both palmdarts in Geraldton is certain as their pupae can be readily distinguished. However, further examination of these palms is required to confirm the existence of a viable breeding population of *C. trichopepla*.

Voucher specimens of *C. trichopepla* and *C. augiades sperthias* are housed in the Insect Collection, Department of Conservation and Land Management, Perth.

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